

E 440

.5

.V28

Copy 1



Class 1 1 1 1

Book 1

1

NOW AND THEN.

SPEECH

OF THE

HON. CHARLES H. VAN WYCK,

OF NEW YORK,

UPON THE REPORT OF THE

COMMITTEE OF THIRTY-THREE UPON THE STATE OF THE UNION

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 29, 1861.

Mr. VAN WYCK. This week completes the nineteenth anniversary of one of the most exciting scenes witnessed in the American Congress. On the 25th day of January, 1842, John Quincy Adams introduced the petition of forty-five citizens of Haverhill, Massachusetts, praying for a peaceful dissolution of the United States. Desiring that the right of petition should be recognized, he moved its reference to a committee, with instructions to report against its prayer. He, with nearly the entire North and South, were opposed to dissolution. For a few years previous to that time, by reason of the excitement with England and her colonies, and other causes, the slavery agitation was deeper and more intense than at any period in the history of our country. The very men who then could not find words sufficiently strong to anathematise those they called traitors, now seem to be courting a traitor's doom, and madly rioting in a traitor's saturnalia. The folly of Abolitionists did not force the South into treason against God and man. Efforts were then being made to abolish slavery in the dock-yards, arsenals, and District of Columbia. Personal liberty bills existed in many of the States; New York had passed one in 1840. Henry A. Wise then predicted, with as much hope of fulfillment as most of your prophecies at this time, that in ten years a black Representative would appear in the National Legislature. All the evils which you now lament existed, then, and the permanency of your institutions in more jeopardy. Since that time, Florida has been added to the galaxy; Texas has been bought and acquired and surrendered to slavery; California was obtained, and the Constitution of a sovereign people placed on her mountains and valleys the royal robe of free labor, and planted on her brow the diadem of liberty; New Mexico has been acquired, and that immense Territory, larger than the original thirteen States, you have been suffered to dedicate to the "peculiar institution." Three-fourths of the territory acquired since 1842 has been surrendered to slavery; and slave property has been steadily increasing in numbers and value. In 1850, a more stringent slave law was given to appease your growing demands.

Why, with no greater cause of complaint, were your people then so strongly attached to the Union? Why did you then deny the power in Congress or the States to dissolve it? If the Union was an indissoluble bond then, why not now?

The position we occupy on the slavery question, and the policy of the Government as to the Territories, is the same held by the fathers of the Republic, nearly all the statesmen of the South, and the Democratic party down to 1848. Because we entertain those views and believe in that policy, and for no other reason, political incendiaries would trample upon the flag and burn the temple of freedom.

On the question of dissolution we now stand where the people of the South and the Democratic party stood in 1842. Shall we now hesitate to stand like men where they proudly stood? And if fall we must, will it not be some consolation to fall amid such splendid ruins, because it will be amid the wreck of your father's policy and your own we will be engulfed? The Abolitionists of the North claimed to be oppressed in 1842, because Congress had spurned the right of petition. Did you propose a great national committee to bargain a truce with traitors, by a barter and betrayal of principle? To some of the men who are now reeking with treason and conspiring against the freedom of man, a reference to their past acts and declarations might be of profit.

When the petition referred to was presented, Mr. Hopkins, of Virginia, asked "If it was in order to burn the petition in presence of the House."

Mr. Wise, of Virginia, asked "If it was in order to move to censure any member presenting such a petition? and to move that the House do now proceed to inquire whether a member has offered such a petition to this body, and to proceed accordingly."

Mr. Merriwether, of Georgia, "Did not think that such a petition should be allowed to come within the walls of this House."

Mr. Campbell, of South Carolina, "Did not think that a petition of such a character should be thus lightly passed over."

Mr. Gilmer, of Virginia, resolved:

"That, in presenting to the consideration of this House a petition for a dissolution of the Union, the

member from Massachusetts, Mr. Adams, has justly merited the censure of this House.

Mr. Marshall, of Kentucky, moved the following resolution:

"Whereas the Federal Constitution is a *permanent* form of Government and of *perpetual* obligation, until altered or modified in the mode pointed out in that instrument." * * * "A proposition, therefore, to dissolve the organic law, is a direct proposition to each member to commit perjury, and involves the crime of high treason:" * * * "is a wound at the Constitution, the existence of the country, and the liberties of the people of these States."

"It struck him with horror, it stupified him; he had not believed it possible that there could be men *wild enough* in the country, and *mad enough*, to make a proposition that the Government of the United States should terminate its own existence, and then to submit it to the members of that House, inviting them to commit perjury or moral treason." "Coming from any quarter, it was sacrilege. The Union was the only means of safety and liberty."

Mr. Wise asked for a voice from the toms, that the Farewell Address of Washington might be heard. After extracts were read, he said, "that the anti-slavery party was against the Government; was an English party. Yes, while the English Abolitionists were moving on Jamaica, and contemplating to make their next demonstration on Cuba; while they were establishing lines of a commercial marine, connecting England and the West Indies with this country, and thus opening the way for a military marine to follow, which, at the first sound of the tocsin, would pour in armies of trained free blacks upon the whole South, this proposition to dissolve the Union was simultaneously brought forward." Can any ardent southerner present so formidable a list of grievances now? "And how happens it that men, who held these sentiments, should be found bringing forward Tory plans for upturning the Government?" "It was a British abolition disunion party." Speaking of Mr. Adams's motion to report against the petition, he adds: "What did that amount to? No more than this, that it was not expedient to dissolve the Union just at this time; not yet; not now. They had not yet lost all their love for that Union recommended by the Father of their Country." "This very ex-President was the very man who, for the first time, invited the Congress of the United States to receive, discuss, deliberate upon, a proposition to break the union of the States. It pointed to that which, should God spare his life, he expected to witness before ten years passed over his head—the election of a black Representative to a seat on that floor. English influence at home and abroad was in league to dissolve this Union." "Go on; you shall have your reward. Go on with this, your moral treason, and carry it so far as to come within Chief Justice Marshall's decision in

Burr's case; and you shall get your hemp. There were no dissolutionists in his section of the country. It they dared to show their faces in his section, they would meet with a very speedy and a very summary disposal." So spoke Henry A. Wise, now one of the leaders of this organized armed rebellion.

Mr. Underwood, of Kentucky, said: "They had no right to dissolve this Union; but were bound to sustain it. Because he knew that to dissolve the bonds of this Union, and separate the different States composing this Confederacy, making the Ohio river the line, and Mason and Dixon's line the boundary, he knew, as soon as that was done, slavery was done in Kentucky, Maryland, and a large portion of Virginia, and it would extend to all the States south of this line. The dissolution of the Union was the dissolution of slavery."

Mr. Botts, in his remarks, stated that a similar resolution, some three or four years ago, was prepared by a member from South Carolina. Mr. William Butler, of that State, desired to know to whom he referred; he replied Mr. Rhett. Mr. Rhett then disclaimed any serious intention in the resolution, that "he only proposed it as an amendment to a proposition to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia; that he had no expectation of passing it or taking a vote on it."

South Carolina talks very much of *status quo* just now. What was her *status quo* in 1842?

Mr. Marshall further said: "You may dissolve—God in his mercy forbid that you ever should. But you will never do it but by force. Never! Never!" "Will they tell the American people that the people of Massachusetts have a right to dissolve their Union. It is the detestation of the South to abolition that makes her a unionist. And it is the love of the North for abolition that has brought her in favor of dissolution." "It goes beyond southern nullifiers. The convention that sat at Columbia never took the ground that Congress had power to dissolve the Union."

Our case is here fully made out, and the argument exhausted. Your own men have proved that neither Congress nor the States can dissolve this Union, save by force; and when you have already commenced that process, you leave us only one course—to oppose force by force. You have driven us to the wall; and we will not, we cannot surrender. We are told that a removal of the cause of danger will produce peace. But what is the cause? You say slavery agitation. In that you stop one degree short of the real cause—which is slavery itself. Now, will you exercise an enlarged patriotism by removing the cause of danger? You may have an open powder magazine on a public thoroughfare of the world. Will you quar-

rel with every traveler who carries a lighted taper whenever his convenience or wants require? Better close your deadly magazine, and remove it from the tread of men. We do not ask this. We only insist that you shall not with it curse the common Territories of the nation. You do not pretend that your institution is endangered in the States. True, you sometimes lament about personal liberty bills, and the tardy execution of the fugitive slave law.

The attempted prohibition of slavery in the Territories is the real cause of complaint. The condition of all the Territories we now own is settled, and we had hoped the inordinate desire to plunder our weak neighbors was subdued. But, mark what the Vice-President, and one of the defeated candidates for the Presidency, in a letter to the Governor of Kentucky, January 6, 1861, says: "The Southern States cannot afford to be shut off from all possibility of expansion towards the tropics by the hostile action of the Federal Government." Let us not be deceived: this key unlocks the southern mind and passions. Dreams of Cuba, Mexico, the Central and South American States, festoon the bloody machinations of southern traitors, as they rendered gorgeous the unholy schemes of Burr and his confederates. In one breath you groan at the evils suffered from the Union and the Federal Government, although nearly the whole time from its existence it has been in your hands or subject to your control. In the next you boast of your great wealth and power; of the spread of your dominions; the increase in the number and value of your slaves; the great overshadowing omnipotence of cotton. A few days since, you sought to demonstrate that northern wealth and commerce, French industry, and British enterprise, depended upon a few slaveholders. The gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. GARNETT,] boastingly pointed to the time, in a few decades, when the slave population would number thirty million.

I stop not here to prove the divinity of freedom or the despotism of slavery. With your cannon pointed at the Capitol, and your bayonets almost at our breasts, it is no time to argue abstract principles, neither on our knees to supplicate for life. At all times, on a question of freedom, man should be right from instinct. Would you take a man by the sounding sea to hear the sullen roar of its waters, or stand him upon the yawning gulf, down which volcanic fires madly rage, or dart their sulphureous fumes and hissing front into the vale below? Would you place him in the smiling valley, teeming with the fruits of autumn, radiating the cheering sunshine of mid-day or the mellow moonbeams of evening; or from the bold mountain summit, beyond the reach of culture's hand or nature's growth, where the dew of evening or the rain of morning only gives life to the

stunted pine and oak, where the eagle builds his eyrie, and the crest wreathed in perpetual snow? Would you stop coldly to reason with such a man the existence of a divine Creator? So, when you take a man, and stand him by the great ocean of humanity, where he bends his ear to catch the surging wail of oppression and want; when he stands over the yawning volcanic fires which despotism has created and is endeavoring to conceal; or in the little valley of human happiness, full of sunshine and peace; or high up on the dreary mountain of oppression, where scarce a green thing may grow, where the sunshine of life, its dews and rains, make desolation more desolate: will you pause to argue the divinity of man's freedom, or prove his inherent right to himself?

But we have now to deal with facts, not fancies; realities, not theory. We supposed that we lived in a Republic where free white men regulated its action and controlled its destiny; that it was a Government of the people for the people. For three-fourths of a century we have grown in wealth, numbers, and power, although you claim to have suffered from multiplied wrongs. South Carolina, in one of her many declarations of independence, says it has been going on for seventy-four years. Quite likely; our fathers commenced a crusade against slavery even in the colonial state; they renewed it in the Declaration of Independence, and continued it after the adoption of the Constitution, in its almost immediate abolition in one-half the States of the Union. And now you scandalize the memory of the revolutionary patriots, who heaved the pathway to national greatness through rivers of blood, with fire and sword, by charging that the only motive for unchaining the slave was the sordid and base consideration that slavery would not pay.

Grant, if you please, that slavery is right; what then? You say that the Territories belong to the people of the whole country. Shall not they who own it control it? Is it unsafe to intrust their destiny with the sovereign people of the Republic? The majority, constitutionally expressed, must govern. What do you mean when you talk of the brute force of majorities, which is manifested without force, and exercised without violence? Is that not safer than the brute force of a minority?

You say you are excluded from settling in the Territories. Not so. Of your eight million population, scarce three hundred thousand are owners of slaves. The hearthstones of many solitary cabins, far away towards the light of the setting sun, are cheered by the songs which the emigrant learned in his southern home. Your seven million five hundred thousand population who have not the advantages of negro property can cross the

dark line which slavery rears, and not be compelled to work in the furrow wet with the sweat of the slave. This very day, is not a fair proportion of the population of that country—of which

"'Twas said that far through the forest wild
And over the mountains bold,
Was a land whose rivers and darkening caves
Were gem'd with the purest gold"—

men reared in a southern clime? Let me illustrate: A poor boy was born in Kentucky; not to an inheritance of wealth and slaves, but entitled to the privileges of that immense territory over which your fathers said the dark wing of slavery should never be spread. He removed to Illinois: by industry carved out for himself reputation, honor, and greatness, and now stands a living embodiment of the principles we profess—the lawfully elected President of the United States. Will Kentucky this day say that the ordinance of Jefferson, excluding slavery from the great Northwest, prevented her citizens from enjoying its benefits, or aspiring to the highest offices in the gift of a free people?

The policy of the dominant party must prevail. In 1820, the policy of the dominant and slaveholding party said slavery should not go north of 36° 30'; in 1854, you reversed that policy, and the dominant party said that slavery should have a struggle with freedom north of that line, and that free labor or slave labor should be baptized in fire and blood on the plains of Kansas. We submitted to the brute force of majorities then. In 1856, you claimed that your Nebraska bill was sustained by the people; and the whole patronage of the Government, the Treasury and sword of the nation unsheathed to *subdue us*. We submitted to the brute force of majorities then. Mr. DOUGLAS told you that by his theory of popular sovereignty you had acquired New Mexico to slavery; we submitted to the brute force of majorities then. We never made any ruffian's threat or braggart's boast, *only waiting* for another expression of the will of the American people. And now, in the same spirit with which you demand the right to convert men into merchandise, you talk of dismembering a great Republic and establishing empires. Do gentlemen so seriously mistake the nature of our Union? The Amphictyonic council, the Achaean and Ionian league, the Swiss and Italian Republics, like the first Confederation of our fathers, were but States in alliance; ours is a Union of the people. The Constitution itself shows by whom made and for what purpose. We, the people, not the States, for the purpose of a more perfect union. The power that created can alone destroy.

The question is not now, Shall the African be a slave, but shall the white freemen of the nation control the Government? Shall I, my constituents, my State, my section, pass under the yoke, and grant a willing

submission to a power which yields to no reason, is controlled by no Constitution, guided by no laws?

We are told that we must submit because we have been misrepresented at home and abroad; because southern people, in their blind infatuation, believe that we intend to overrun, devastate, and destroy, the southern States, and liberate their slaves by force. I am not disposed to humiliate myself to excuse or atone for another's folly. We are not responsible for the ignorance of your people. We have neither created nor contributed to it. You suffer papers filled with the ultra doctrines of Garrison to be circulated, while those which are exponents of Republican principles are consigned to the flames. Southern and northern orators have willfully and wickedly misrepresented our purposes and objects. You have been arousing and alarming the worst passions of your people, and now you say you cannot control them. You have sown the wind, now yourselves reap the whirlwind. You have created the storm, now bend yourselves before its fury or break. While you have lashed the angry waves into threatening billows, you ask us to cut away our masts and scuttle our ship, so that you may enjoy one wide-spread ruin. You are now exultant over the destruction you are hoping to produce.

"Like the moonbeams on the blasted heath
Mocking its desolation"—

you are striving to prevent the fulfillment of the prediction made by the Bishop of Cloyne more than a century ago, when speaking of this vast continent:

"Times noblest empire is the last."

You have been shorn of your strength by your own Delilah; and now in your blindness would wrap your arms around the pillars of the Republic and perish in its ruins.

But your northern allies are atoning for their work of folly by branding their own falsehoods. Ought not this to remove apprehension from the minds of your people? You trusted them to believe their falsehoods. Why not believe them when the dangers they have produced and the tears they have excited are extorting from them an honest confession? If you will not hear Moses and the Prophets, you would not be convinced though one rose from the dead.

This hour witnesses the fulfilment of all we have predicted as to the encroachments and demands of slavery. From coercing the labor of one race, it places its hand on our throat, and, in the language of the highwayman, demands our money or our life, our Government or our principles. Do they fail to see that, when this institution is carried to the Territories, the freemen of the North are driven from it?

What a commentary upon this institution

that, like the Upas tree, every green leaf and flower of those rights which exalt man and dignify his existence, must perish beneath its shadow. A few days since, when the gentleman from Georgia was delivering his valedictory, and presenting his grievances to the world, he said they could not tolerate that white men like SUMNER should address southern audiences; and that freedom of the press and circulation of printed matter could not be allowed in his State; and, for fear the incoming Administration should exercise its power to prevent the rifling of the mails in southern States, where we pay from the Treasury \$2,500,000 for their transportation, he gave notice, in advance, that they would commit treason and destroy the Union. Can the enormity of the slave power be presented in any stronger light? This very day, beneath the shadow of hoary oppression, and at the foot of thrones covered with the dust of centuries, free speech and free press begins to grow and flourish. Yet the American Republic, at the peril of its existence, is forced to extend a system more despotic than tyranny and more dogmatical than priestcraft.

The popular sovereignty candidate for the Presidency, after the humiliating boast that he could travel through the South unharmed, adds that Abraham Lincoln was born in Kentucky—the graves of his parents were there—but he dare not visit them. Dare not! Is that the language to address to American citizens? That little sentence contributed more to the election of Lincoln than the speeches of all his friends. If that were true, freemen could feel and understand its force; and the quiet, though stern men of the nation would naturally inquire upon what principles the Government was being administered. Dare not go by the graves of his fathers! A man born in Kentucky, with no brand on his brow, and no stain on his soul, pure and upright in all the relations of life, charged with no crime against the laws of God and man, dare not travel through what he boasts to call his country, to plant flowers or shed tears upon the graves of his ancestors! And you coolly say we must have no Government to protect such men. Kentucky has spurned the demagogue, and now she repudiates his libel.

Now, you ask us to compromise. What have we to concede? We have done you no wrong, and propose none. You have been compromising for years, until you yourselves have often told us the day for compromise was past. You compromised in 1850, and called it a finality. You compromised in 1854 by violating a sacred compromise, called that a finality, and said you had removed the agitation out of Congress. The only finality we have had for years, we had at the ballot-box the 6th day of November last. True to your instincts, you are

trying to set aside that finality that you may renew agitation. You propose now to lay your hands upon the ark of the covenant our fathers set up, to amend the Constitution, to give you greater guarantees for slavery than the States exacted when each held slaves. You have suggested no compromise that does not involve submission and surrender on our part. You have proposed no plan which concedes anything to the North. You ask us to admit the truth of your charges against us, by a declaration in the Constitution that we will never steal your slaves or deprive you of your rights. Of what avail would that be if your present position is correct, that one State, however insignificant, can destroy the whole fabric? You who have violated the Constitution and set the laws at defiance, are demanding constitutional guarantees that we will do neither! Will you tell what concessions you propose to the North? Do you propose any additional security for the protection of the life and liberty of the northern man in the slave States? Additional security for the sacred right of property when that property consists in books on political, moral, or religious subjects not having your approbation? That you will not banish the cottage Bible from your realm because its compiler may be opposed to slavery? Any security for the freedom of speech and press, already supposed to be secured by the Constitution?

You say you concede to freedom north of 36° 30'; that is no concession. We bought that right in 1820, when we received Missouri as a slave State into the Union. You forced that right from us in 1854, and then we conquered it through the strife and blood of a civil war; so that we have already a double title—first by purchase, and then by conquest. But you yield to freedom all that we may acquire north of that line. We never can obtain any more. Canada and the British possessions will never be ours. All our future acquisitions, if any, must be south of that line in the direction of the tropics, and you demand its unconditional surrender to slavery. Under the delusion of a compromise you seek to betray us into a surrender to the very men who are compact-breakers, and who claim that a compromise, to which the faith of the nation was pledged, had no sacredness beyond an ordinary act for the collection of the revenue or the establishment of a post route. You have for years been telling us that all geographical lines were sectional and dangerous to the peace and stability of the Union, entirely unconstitutional; finally, you obtained a decision of the Supreme Court to that effect, when you suddenly discover that the Constitution is unconstitutional, and you seek its amendment to establish sectional lines. In 1820 you establish the Missouri line to save the Union; in 1854 you destroy it to

save the Union; and now, in 1861, you can see the salvation of the Republic only through its re-establishment and perpetuity, with the new and startling condition annexed, that slavery must be forever protected in all our future acquisitions. No wonder gentlemen are regretting its destruction; no wonder ghosts of murdered victims will rise before them, and not down at their bidding; no wonder they should strive to banish the apparition of the bloody hand, and men like the Senator from Illinois should desire to act as though they had never uttered a word or cast a vote.

Your unholy crusade, therefore, against the Union, is to extend the area of slavery. For that purpose you invoke the God of battles, when your system ignores all His attributes and defies the spirit of His teachings. You talk of the sacredness of your homes, when for years you have been despoiling the homes of thousands, and suffer four million human beings to have no hearthstones around which the affections may cluster. You talk about the recollection of wives and children to nerve your arm, when your system destroys the relation of husband and wife, and violates the holiest tie of parent and child. You talk of reconstruction. Believe it not. The compromises of the present Constitution once lost, you never can regain. Think you another Senate can be formed wherein Delaware and Florida can equal New York and Pennsylvania? Another House of Representatives wherein you will be allowed twenty Representatives on account of your property in man? You are now opposed to the Army and Navy, because you boldly assert that an enforcement of the laws means a coercion of the States. You were willing to vote millions to transport troops and provisions two thousand miles, over prairie and desert, to coerce our brethren in Utah, when you said they were in rebellion to the Government. You sent the Army into Kansas to subdue the freemen in the North. You have used the Federal troops to enforce the fugitive slave law. When John Brown, with as much authority to seize the property of the nation as you possess, took the arsenal at Harper's Ferry, the marines of the United States were sent to its rescue. You dreaded not then its despotic power. The camp had no terrors. The plume of the soldier and the gilded trappings of the officer did not fill you with disgust. You oppose coercion, yet, by force of armed men, you seize the forts and navy-yards of the United States, and trample the stars and stripes in the dust.

I desire not to preserve this Union at the point of the bayonet; but we do not mean to be driven from it by force. If you desire a peaceable secession, why do you not seek it? A convention of all the States possibly would bid the seceding States depart in peace. But

when you forcibly seize the Federal property, and then fire upon its flag, you should not sit down and picture the horrors of civil war. You seem willing to spread the pall of desolation over the land, strike down the last home of the oppressed, the last hope of freedom, for the purpose of extending, in the name of liberty, and under the shield of religion, the institution of slavery. The gentleman from Maryland, [Mr. HARRIS,] who has just taken his seat, appeals to us most earnestly to make some compromise to save the Union. Why not appeal to the men who are laboring for its destruction? As well stop the bold fireman who is heroically struggling with the flames, instead of seizing the incendiary who applied the torch to the temple. We desire not the destruction even of South Carolina. Jewish history, which you so much venerate, admonishes us that they had a South Carolina in their confederacy, and she seceded. After three severe battles, the disunionists were exterminated. The conquerors indulged in no shouts of victory, but "came to the house of God, and abode there till even, before God, and lifted up their voices and wept sore; and said: O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel?"

If the people consent, let the cotton States depart. Then let us vote millions to purchase the slaves of the border States as fast as either of them may desire to sell; then, let us purchase for them a home in Central America, where, by our fostering care, we may rear them to habits of industry and good government, and, in a measure, atone for the injury and injustice ages of oppression have heaped upon them.

An intelligent correspondent of the New York Herald furnishes that paper the following figures: Slavery in Maryland has decreased 6,000 in the last decade. There are in that State 80,000 slaves; which, at \$500 per head, would only amount to \$40,000,000. A duty of ten per cent. on the \$400,000,000 of annual imports would pay for them in a single year. Baltimore would soon rival Philadelphia as a manufacturing city, and Maryland would be converted into a garden to supply the wants of northern cities. Delaware has only 2,000 slaves. One million dollars would indemnify the owners, and make her a free State. Missouri has but 100,000 slaves. Fifty million dollars would pay for them, and make her rival Illinois in wealth, population, and improvement. Thus less than \$100,000,000 would rid them all of an institution for which neither their climate nor products are suited, and bestow on them the advantages of free labor.

You also insist upon dissolving the Union because some men believe that slavery will finally pass from the earth. Who that has faith in God does not believe that in the end

all forms of oppression will disappear? The principles of our fathers we will ever adore as "tokens upon our hands" and as offering up millions of lives and oceans of blood, have not yet solved the problem of the white man's deliverance. Man for ages was as blind as the unthinking horse; the mind in its crude development revealed not to him the secret of his power, nor his right divine to a free manhood as of stern justice uprising from the innate intelligence within him. Had it been otherwise, the throne and he who sat on it would have been powdered in the dust; nor longer would the body have submitted to stripes and chains, nor the spirit flapped its wings against bonds and prison walls in its soarings to be free. The wild democracies of Greece would have made liberty calm and tranquil as a summer sea, and the turbulent republics of the Swiss cantons would have humbled the proud palaces of Europe before the stern and steady tramp of enlightened freemen. Everywhere we sympathize for the oppressed, and hope for their deliverance. Mr. Yancy in a speech in New York city last October, said, the Russian serf had the right to revolution. Every man can run the parallels. In the late heroic struggle for Italian nationality and unity were we not allowed to breathe the prayer that from her baptism of blood the sun of universal freedom might break forth and light man's pathway with a brightness as clear and beautiful and free as that which tinged her mellow waves, beamed in beauty upon her valleys, and fringed the brown summits of her towering mountains.

We believe the time must come when the white race will be free and the African no longer a slave. Do you now propose to retard the civilization of the world for centuries and to turn back the hands on the dial of liberty? Would you inaugurate the time when beneath shadows of the monuments reared in freedom's cause the watch-fires will cease to burn; "when the patriot mother, nursing her half-famished infant, will startle at the hoot of the owl or the rustling of the raven's wing?" God grant you may never accomplish so much. I would rather hope for returning reason, or even avenging justice, and patiently await the time when

"Freedom, hand in hand with labor,
Walketh strong and brave;
On the forehead of his neighbor
No man writeth, 'slave!'"

I said last winter, I repeat now: I will institute no comparison between the North and the South as to numbers or natural courage. Read the lessons of history, and learn from them of those who have been reared "where nature's heart beats strong and high amid the hills." You may widen and deepen the gulf between freedom and slavery, but can you vainly hope to bridge the Hellespont or canal Mount Athos?

The principles of our fathers we will ever adore as "tokens upon our hands" and as "frontlets between our eyes." You may shatter the Union, but the holiest association for ages to come will gather around and garnish its ruins. The travel-stained pilgrim in liberty's cause will, through all time, weep its overthrow.

"Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled:

You may break, you may ruin, the vase, if you will;

But the scent of the roses will hang round it still."

You may destroy our temple, but, like the sacred olive on the Acropolis, the burnt stump will immediately put forth a "fresh shoot, a cubit in length." Have you some modern Minotaur, for which periodically you will exact a tribute of principle? Can you not be satisfied with the golden fleece; but will you carry off some Medea besides? Pursue not so far that, like Aristomenes, you may lose your shield, and there may be no case of Trophonius in which to find it.

Let us be true to the Constitution, the Union, and the laws; let us no longer sepulcher dreams that are dead; and the rainbow of promise will arch again for us, and the visions of night once more be gilded with glory.

I think I can see the finger of the Almighty moving on the troubled waters. Men and nations will do but little in warring against His decrees, or compromising His judgments. Reckless threats or idle boasts of your power and courage will avail nothing. The gentleman from Virginia exulted that Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans were slaveholders. He may yet learn that a people can possess the vices and evils of one generation without attaining to their valor and greatness. Remember that his arm is strong whose cause is just. The slaves of the Greeks were of the white races, of those captured in war, with whom they compromised by giving slavery instead of death. At that period of the world, the Ethiopian was highly esteemed. The Grecian said "he was of swarthy complexion from his neighborhood to the sun, was a favorite of the gods, and sometimes honored by visits from the celestials." Peter faltered in the path of duty, and fell. Christ refused to compromise, and established His divinity. Like Peter, we are erring. If anything could seduce us from the integrity of our faith, it would be to strike hands over the altar of our common liberties with noble patriots at the South and on this floor, who, feeling that they have a country to save and a God to serve, have rebuked disunion and branded treason.

All hail the gallant State of Kentucky, peering like a rock in mid-ocean, unshaken by wind and wave, beating back the mad, tempestuous billows! Your gallant Holt

unmasked treason at the capital, and your noble Anderson sustained your honor and ours at Fort Sumter. Land of the "dark and bloody ground," whose name kindles glorious associations and holy memories! Brave, loyal men of Kentucky; you of the "lion heart and eagle eye" have given a new augury that the Union must be preserved in fadeless immortality. Come not as suppliants, nor with arms in your hands, but as you are coming, with the simple garland of olive on your brows, and hearts glowing with love for the Constitution and laws of your country; make known your grievances: and the nation will rise up with one accord to do you justice. Do such a people wrong? Never! Southern men who have made this charge against us will be the first to renounce it. No, sir; the least of the rights of Kentucky under the Constitution can never be taken or attempted to be taken from her. Should her rights be invaded, thousands of northern swords would leap from their scabbards, and every free State would feel proud to furnish men and treasure in her defense.

The great commoner sleeps well on your bosom, and you are determined that his grave shall never be moistened with brothers' blood, and over his tomb shall never be heard the battle-shock of brothers in conflict. You venerate his memory, and cherish the sentiments he uttered in the Senate Chamber in 1850, when Georgia was threatening to secede from the Union; when he said:

"Now I stand here in my place, meaning to be unswayed by any threats, whether they come from individuals or from States. I should deplore as much as any man that arms should be raised against the authority of the Union, either by individuals or by States. But after all that has occurred, if any one State, or a portion of the people of any State, choose to place themselves in military array against the Government of the Union, I am for trying the strength of the Government; I am for ascertaining whether we have a Government or not—practical, efficient, capable of maintaining its authority and upholding the powers and interests which belong to a Government. Nor, sir, am I to be alarmed or dissuaded from any such course by intiminations of the spilling of blood. If blood is to be spilt, by whose fault is it? It will be the fault of those who choose to raise the standard of disunion and endeavor to prostrate this Government. And, sir, when that is done, so long as it pleases God to give me a voice to express my sentiments, or an arm, weak and enfeebled as it may be by age, that voice and that arm will be on the side of my country, for the support of the general authority, and for the maintenance of the powers of this Union."

The true men of Kentucky need have no fears of their brethren in the North; but had they, to their devotion and nobility almost any concessions would be yielded that a brave, loyal people ought to ask of brave, loyal brethren.

We have been told by Senators that some of the southern States are on the war path, and, while they are brandishing the toma-

hawk and scalping-knife, about converting the warfare of opinion into a contest of blood; while the Catalines of the nation are conspiring in the Capitol to destroy the liberties of the people and the powers of the Government: while treason has been flaunting in the departments of the Administration, and our proud ensign, which has commanded the fear of hostile nations and the respect of all the world, defiantly insulted, we are called upon to compromise with rebels, with cannon pointed at us stolen from the national arsenals. For myself, sir, never! I would rather perish on the threshold of this Capitol, defending the stars and stripes which float over it, than vote, at such a time, for any compromise involving a sacrifice of principle. You yourselves would despise a people who would exhibit the cowardice to retreat in the face of an armed and threatening foe. The true men of the north and South will rally round that standard sheet, determined to defend and protect it from enemies without and foes within. Some stars on its glittering fold may dart off into a comet's wandering or a meteor's flight, but they will find they shine not so brightly in any other constellation.

In the madness of the hour, you sing no more our national ballads. "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "Hail Columbia," which for years have inspired glowing patriotism, no longer kindle in your hearts the holy emotion of freedom. You sing now the more incendiary *Marseaise*. Beware lest, while you sing, your slaves may learn to act its poetry—

"But man is man, and who is more?
Then shall they longer lash, and goad us?
Oh, liberty! can man resign thee,
Once having felt thy generous flame;
Can dungeon, bolts, and bars confine thee,
Or whips thy noble spirit tame?"

No loyal American, whatever his individual or sectional grievances, can wantonly dishonor the flag of his fathers. His heart will cling to it in the spirit of Ruth, when she said to Naomi, "Whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die; and there will I be buried."

When the passion of the hour subsides, and reason leads to a calm reflection, you will say, with us:

"'Tis the flag of America, it floats over the brave;
'Tis the fairest unfurled on the land or the wave;
But, thou brightest in story and matchless in fight,
'Tis the herald of mercy as well as of might."

"In the cause of the wronged may it ever be first.
Where tyrants are humbled, and fetters are burst;
Be justice the war shout, and dastard is he
Who would scruple to die 'neath the flag of the free."

5062

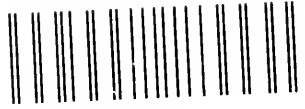








LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 895 800 7